



Masonic
Charitable Foundation

FESTIVAL BITES

Surrey's **BIG WEEK**



For Freemasons, for families, for everyone

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Background

In general, every Festival Appeal has the same objectives and the same outcomes. Along the way each Province will put together a plan to run their Festival and each will know that at some point there will be a period where ‘Festival fatigue’ strikes.

This will cause donations to stall, enthusiasm to waver and reaction to outputs from the Festival team to be met with apathy. No Province is alone in suffering from this.

When planning a Festival Appeal it is therefore important to include a strategy that will re-invigorate and raise interest in the appeal during any potential ‘mid-term’ slump.

This was a problem that the Province of Surrey solved with ‘The Big Week!’

1. A big idea, a big objective

Surrey's initial objective was to arrange an event that involved minimal risk and cost, and was relatively easy to organise whilst at the same time producing big returns in terms of raising funds, raising awareness and re-invigorating the membership.

The idea behind a 'Big Week!' is to co-ordinate a series of events that take place across all parts of a Province, focussed around one specific week. It requires a variety of activities that will enable as many members, their families and friends to take part.

It relies on the support of everyone, from the Provincial Grand Master and his Executive, through to the Masonic centres, Lodges and individual members.

A 'Big Week!' when well organised can help to counter a 'mid-term slump' through raising funds, raising awareness, encouraging participation and inclusion and having fun.



2. Planning

‘Fail to plan, plan to fail!’

As with any initiative, if you want it to succeed and produce the best results, good planning is essential. The planning stage should commence with the appointment of a team or committee that will organise, manage and deliver the initiative. The Chair of this committee should be appointed by the Festival Committee.

A good framework for the committee or team is as follows:

- **Chair** – This will ideally be the Provincial Grand Charity Steward or a member of the Festival Committee
- **Secretary** – This needs to be someone who is organised and efficient.
- **Marketing Officer** – A suitable candidate will be someone who is capable of putting together a strong ‘look and feel’ for the event and produce material for inclusion in Provincial publications as well as social media content.
- **Social Media Officer** – This person will need to manage social media output and work with the marketing officer to agree suitable content.
- **Logistics Officer** – This requires an organised person who can keep an accurate diary/register of events that are taking place throughout the period of the ‘Big Week!’
- **Liaison Officers** – If there is already a team of liaison officers as part of the Festival Committee then the same individuals can be co-opted into this team as they will already have good access to Lodges and members. If not, then recruit a small group of individuals who are able to communicate well with others to promote the event.

It is a good idea to get a ‘Big Week!’ Committee in place as early as possible, even up to a year in advance, as this will allow plenty of time to consider, plan and implement all aspects of the ‘Big Week!’. There are a number of things that the team will need to contemplate and establish as early as possible. These are:



- **An accurate timeline*.**
- **A principal or focal event/activity.**
- **Secondary events.**
- **A marketing plan.**
- **A social media and communications plan.**
- **A presentation pack and briefing notes.**



* An accurate timeline should be created once the main, or 'principal', activity has been established. This timeline should include any and every part of the planning, launch and promotional activities. Remember to include copy dates for Provincial publications so that deadlines are not missed. The timeline will go up to, but not include, full details of the 'Big Week!' itself. At this point a more accurate diary of events will be required as there will be planning to do to ensure that members of the Provincial Executive and senior Masons can attend events. You should also plan a de-brief session after the 'Big Week!' has been completed

3. Marketing

The marketing officer will be responsible for ensuring that every possible avenue of promoting the event is used. He should develop a comprehensive marketing plan including the creation of a strong 'look and feel' that can be used consistently throughout the build-up to the 'Big Week!'.

It is useful to create a logo that will be instantly recognisable to the membership as well as a full strategic plan on how, when and where the 'Big Week!' is going to be promoted.

The marketing officer should be





responsible for creating content for Provincial publications and websites, making sure that the articles are punchy and eye-catching. Following the launch of the 'Big Week!', articles should feature in every edition of Provincial publications with content mirrored, but not

repeated word-for-word, on social media platforms.

A presentation pack and briefing documents will need to be produced. These will be an invaluable tool when visiting Lodges and giving presentations, particularly if they can convey the imagery and a standard message about the aims and objectives of the 'Big Week!'. Official Visitors/Visiting Officers as well as members of the Festival and 'Big Week!' Committees should be given these documents to use when visiting Lodges and when giving presentations.

The presentation pack should include:

- A brief PowerPoint presentation outlining all aspects of the 'Big Week!'.
- An adapted text only version of the PowerPoint presentation to use as briefing notes.
- Flyers and information sheets that can be handed out to members.
- Sponsorship forms/Application forms/tickets etc., for the principal event/activity.
- A list of ideas and suggestions of events and activities that Lodges and individuals may want to consider organising or



taking part in.

- **Contact details for the ‘Big Week!’ team members and liaison officers.**

4. Social Media and Communications

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Whilst the use of social media platforms amongst membership varies from one Province to another, it is an important part of promoting the ‘Big Week!’. It is therefore a good idea to create a social media and communications plan that will establish how events and activities will be promoted through multiple outlets.



Encouraging members to sign up to Twitter feeds and join a Facebook group will help spread the message. If possible, create a dedicated website, or page on the Festival and/or Provincial websites. Make use of email to send updates as well.

Ensure that any material distributed by the social media officer follows the same ‘look and feel’ to other marketing material.



Good communication will ultimately bring you success. In Surrey, in addition to coverage on the internet, through social media and in Provincial publications, a ‘three-pronged’ approach was adopted to launch the ‘Big Week!’.

Firstly, a letter was issued by the Provincial Grand Master and was sent (via email) to the Worshipful Master of every Lodge in the Province.



A similar letter was issued by the Assistant Provincial Grand Masters and sent (via email) to the secretaries of the Lodges in their groups.

Finally another, similar letter was sent from the Provincial Grand Charity Steward to all Lodge Charity Stewards. Again, this was sent via email.

This correspondence was all sent at the same time. It was felt that by taking this approach, all bases were covered in terms of communicating with Lodges. Another benefit of taking this approach was the engagement of all members of the Provincial Executive.

Surrey found that this initial way of communicating with Lodges was successful, particularly when backed up by reports given by Official Visitors/Visiting Officers at Lodge meetings.

The appointed liaison officers should be tasked with contacting and presenting to the Masonic centres around the Province. Getting the centres engaged is a positive move as they can host events and help promote the 'Big Week!'. It is advisable to make contact with the centres as early as possible to discuss availability of rooms and facilities. It is possible that the centres may want to incorporate 'open days' with their events and this should be encouraged as it brings the public in and can lead to new members.

If centres want to hold an event and need help organising it, find a Lodge or a number of Lodges that meet at that centre and get them involved.



The liaison officers can also make contact with various Provincial groups. For example, Widows Associations, Sports Associations and Master Mason Clubs can all be encouraged to organise events or activities.





Surrey provides a good example of this. The Surrey Masonic Widows Association held an event in conjunction with one of the Masonic centres. Their traditional afternoon tea had fantastic support and participation, and created a wonderful news story.

5. Events

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The joy of the ‘Big Week!’ is that the Committee only have to arrange a very small number of events. The majority of events should be arranged and undertaken by Lodges around the Province.

However for the ‘Big Week!’ to work, a focal or principal event needs to be arranged. Sometimes referred to as a ‘pied-piper’ event this will be the major activity that will underpin the whole ‘Big Week!’.

It will require support from the Provincial Executive and ideally the Provincial Grand Master.

Surrey provides a good example of a principal event with their sponsored tandem skydive. It was extremely effective because the Provincial Grand Master got behind the event and took part. The team was able to use this to encourage sponsorship around the Province with many Lodges supporting his endeavour.

However, this was not the only reason for its success. Out of a team of 16 skydivers, 9 were ladies and included the wives of three Assistant Provincial Grand Masters. The ‘Ladies that Launched’ created a real buzz around the whole venture and no doubt helped towards the huge and positive reaction that this event attracted.

Whilst the hope is that most of the events will be organised and arranged by Lodges and individual members, it is a good idea to have two or three activities arranged by the team, in addition to the principal activity.

When thinking about these events it is important to remember that there will be a wide variety of ways in which the members will take part. Some Lodges and members will simply want to contribute financially to an event, others will want to take part and others will want to organise their own.

Therefore create events that have a wide range of appeal, for example:

Prize draw

If you can secure a ‘money can’t buy’ experience as a prize, a prize draw can be an effective way for members to participate through the simple purchase of a ticket. There are rules to follow when running a prize draw so it is best to check with



your local authority in advance.



Sporting event

Whether it's golf, bowling, go-karting, shooting or any other sporting activity, a sports event can become a great fundraiser. If a Province has a sports association then they will be an ideal choice to help with arranging such an event.

Masonic centre-based activities

Including the Masonic centres is a great way to encourage participation in events, and events such as casino nights, wine tasting, indoor sports, black tie events, open days, fetes and fayres can garner excellent support when promoted effectively.

You will need to have a list of ideas that individuals and Lodges can use as many will not have ideas of their own. This list may include Lodge social events, sponsored activities, family days and so on. Keep in mind that the best ideas are the most unusual and original.

Again, Surrey members have come up with some good examples including a sponsored underwater cycle!

In total the Surrey committee planned six events with over 20 additional events organised by Lodges and individual members.

Finally, whilst the aim is for all the events to be focused around the 'Big Week!' itself, some Lodges may want to hold events that fall just outside the set dates, to tie in with other events such as meetings. This is fine, as long as the event is in the spirit of the 'Big Week!'.

6. Participation

It is difficult to determine exactly how many members will take part in a 'Big Week!', but you can try to estimate.

Using Surrey as the example: Taking the number of people who purchased a prize draw ticket, sponsored someone to do something, attended BBQs and race nights, took part in an event such as the skydive team, it was calculated that a third of Surrey Masons had an involvement with the 'Big Week!'.

7. Outcomes

For the 'Big Week!' to be considered a success there needs to be a number of outcomes:

- A significant amount of funds raised.
- Good participation across the Province.
- Involvement of Masonic centres and Masonic groups such as Widows Associations etc.
- Good media exposure.
- Potential for new members.
- Legacy.

Were these outcomes achieved in Surrey?

- **Amount raised** – In total, more than £60,000 was raised through the 'Big Week!'. This included £30,000 for the Tandem Skydive and demonstrates the importance of holding a major sponsored event.



- **Prize draw** – This raised around £4,000 and was achieved by selling the tickets from the launch date. The prize draw was then arranged to take place during the ‘Big Week!’
- **Participation** – A wide range of people took part in the ‘Big Week!’ including Freemasons, their partners, children and friends.
- **Involvement** – It was clear that involving Masonic centres, the Widows Association, the Sports Association and similar groups was instrumental in making the ‘Big Week!’ a success.
- **Media** – Surrey’s ‘Big Week!’ demonstrated how important social media can be when used creatively and effectively. It was a vital tool in promoting the events and the ‘Big Week!’ encouraged a good number of new users on the Provincial feeds. Surrey also gained press coverage in several local papers through the use of effective press releases.
- **Membership** – This was difficult to gauge but one Surrey Lodge held a ‘Big Week!’ event which resulted in two initiates for that Lodge.
- **Legacy** – The ‘Big Week!’ proved to be a useful exercise to focus the Province mid-Festival, and provided a good opportunity to re-launch and create new momentum. The idea of organising events that allow many members to take part has taken hold in Surrey, with many Lodges now organising their own activities. Surrey has also continued to hold one or two annual Provincial events that act as an opportunity for large participation and a way to focus attention on their Festival Appeal.

Surrey’s ‘Big Week!’ proved to be a success based on these outcomes.

With thanks to W. Bro. David Olliver, Provincial Grand Charity Steward for the Province of Surrey and the members of Surrey's 'BIG WEEK!' Committee.

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